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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [SI](#)

SUBJECT: SLOVENIA: GOVERNMENT WINS VOTE OF CONFIDENCE

REF: A. LJUBLJANA 716

[1](#)B. LJUBLJANA 713

[1](#)C. LJUBLJANA 707

GOVERNMENT WINS, BUT DOESN'T GAIN SOUGHT-AFTER SUPPORT

[1](#)1. (U) On November 19, the Slovene National Assembly voted in favor of the government in response to Prime Minister Janez Jansa's demand for a vote of confidence. The Parliament voted to support the current government by a margin of 51 to 33 (all the coalition members of Parliament plus the two representatives of minorities voted in favor). Although Jansa had expected to win the vote, he was dissatisfied because he had hoped to receive stronger support from the opposition. The PM had tried to connect the vote of confidence to Slovenia's EU Presidency, and lost on that count.

PM DENOUNCES OPPOSITION'S LACK OF SUPPORT

[1](#)2. (U) Jansa's November 15 demand for a vote of confidence came after independent candidate Danilo Tuerk won the presidential election of November 11 and the government lost a referendum vote on privatization of insurance (reftel C). On November 19, the PM opened the session (aired live on television) with a two-hour presentation of his reasons for the confidence measure, including criticizing the opposition for actively attempting to sully Slovenia's reputation abroad. Citing similar language found in both a September petition by journalists that charged the government of undue pressures on the media and in documents drafted by the opposition party Social Democrats, Jansa accused the opposition of manipulating journalists in an effort to undermine the government. He rejected charges of the government trying to pressure the media and presented a study that showed almost three times the number of published anti-government articles in a three month period than in a previous administration as proof that this government did not influence the press. Opposition parties did not address the PM's contentions.

OPPOSITION MAINTAINS SUPPORT FOR SLOVENIA DURING EU PRESIDENCY

[1](#)3. (U) Jansa less successfully claimed the vote of confidence was necessary to demonstrate all parties' support for Slovenia's turn at the helm of the EU Presidency. In the opposition's turn at presenting their positions, however, they rejected this connection and voted against the government. Opposition lawmaker and Zares party member Matej Lahovnik said that Jansa's insistence that the opposition should demonstrate its support for the EU presidency by voting for confidence in the government

was unreasonable. "We are simply acting like an opposition in a democratic society," explained Lahovnik during the session's debate.

14. (U) Jansa stated that he interpreted the opposition's vote against the government as nullifying the May 2007 agreement for cooperation during the EU Presidency. He added that he would measure the opposition's willingness to cooperate by acts, not signatures.

COMMENT

15. (C) The vote of confidence for the government should put an end to last week's sudden spell of uncertainty just before Slovenia takes over the EU Presidency. Some analysts viewed Jansa's two-hour presentation as a solid justification of his actions, although others viewed his gambit as an alarm not worth the risk in the run-up to the EU Presidency. Post expects that despite this uproar and the PM's analysis, most of the opposition will play a constructive role during the EU Presidency. END COMMENT

COLEMAN